Ground-breaking research and unparalleled clinical care begin with dedicated faculty, technicians, and personnel. Sustaining this kind of excellence demands the acquisition of new equipment to ensure doctors and patients have access to state-of-the-art techniques and care. This year, the Ophthalmology and Vision Science Department worked closely with the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) to receive a $160,000 matching grant. The FlexStation 3 Microplate Reader will revolutionize how researchers screen for new pharmaceutical drugs, drastically promoting newer and more creative ways to experiment. The Dynamic Contour Tonometer, will provide better information for clinicians and better care for patients. The HRT3 Tomographer is a state-of-the-art imaging device for the optic nerve, allowing clinicians to more accurately assess the progression of glaucoma.

The Dynamic Contour Tonometer directly measures pressure in the eye (the “puff of air”) and incorporates new technology that measures the pressure in the eye without the influence of the thickness of the underlying cornea, allowing clinicians to measure the pressure of the eye layer, with more precision, and with increased safety and patient comfort.

This recent matching grant from LCIF is the third of its kind to the Department over the past 10 years. Remarkably, all of the equipment purchased with these funds remains in good condition and in use in research laboratories. With these tools, faculty can maintain their world-class status and continue their remarkable service to the Arizona community. Deep gratitude extends to every Lion in Arizona for making this research possible.

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Cecile Moore- A Coin and a Confession

When asked about the basis of her and her husband Frank’s generous support of eye disease research over the years, Cecile Moore shared that they had decided to provide substantial funding for research that improves sight and hearing. She goes on to further explain the genesis of their generosity by recalling two stories that kindled their impulse to help those threatened with deafness or blindness.

The first story involved Cecile deeply when she was a small child. As a Chinese refugee in Hong Kong, 5 year-old Cecile remembers looking down onto the street from her family’s window trying to identify a noise she heard below. As she looked out, she saw a man sitting on the sidewalk banging a can against the street. She asked her mother, “What is wrong with that man?” Her mother said, “He is blind and cannot work in order to feed his family.” The next day the man was back banging his can. Five year-old Cecile couldn’t bear it. She took a coin from the dining room table and threw it down onto the street as far as she could. Her mother was very upset and asked Cecile why she had done thrown the coin. Cecile told her, “So he can feed his family.” Her mother replied, “You have thrown the family’s budget for breakfast, lunch and dinner out the window. That early inpt had informed her that she had just thrown the family’s budget for vision care and blindness prevention.

The second turning point in her life came later. Frank Moore had a hearing deficit that worsened as she grew older and caused her to withdraw. When Frank and Cecile asked why she was not interacting with the family, her mother answered, “He has lost his hearing.” Frank’s hearing loss continued to deteriorate. He was back banging his can. Five years after that, Frank became even more involved with the UA Ophthalmology Research Department. After he was diagnosed with age-related macular degeneration. They committed a significant portion of their life savings to support scientific research at the University of Arizona that would improve life for people of low vision.

On a recent visit to Dr. Brian McKay’s Macular Degeneration Research Laboratory, Cecile had numerous scientific and practical questions regarding the hindrance of hearing. She said, “It is fascinating to see the progress they are making and I am proud of the solid scientific work underway to better treat this disease.” It is funny now; I am paying great attention to whether people have blue eyes or brown eyes and am concerned about whether or not this means they will get Macular Degeneration. All of a sudden this has become noticeable and important to me.”

The confession of a beloved family member battling deafness and the impulsive gift of a single coin as a child has made Cecile Moore a significant partner in scientific research. Though her husband Frank died in 2004, she continues to make a difference in the process of eradicating Macular Degeneration.

The Eyeball Express

People who donate their eyes for use in transplant research or for research on a priceless service for society. Unfortunately, eye donation for research is dramatically down in Arizona and in the rest of the U.S. This is unfortunate because many of the blinding diseases that affect Arizonans like Macular Degeneration, Diabetic Retinopathy and Glaucoma are predominantly human diseases. Scientists require the use of human eyes for research to find a cure.

Due to a complete absence of human donor eyes from Donor Network of Arizona, the primary organ and tissue procurement organization in Arizona, researchers have had to look elsewhere. Two years ago, the University of Arizona vision researchers discovered that Sun Health Research Institute in Sun City procured eye donations along with brain donations for their brain bank. The two quickly established a relationship to obtain these human donor eyes for vision research at The University of Arizona.

The problem was getting these human donor eyes from Sun City to Tucson in time so that they were still viable for research. Fortunately, our friends in the Arizona Lions Clubs have stepped up again to help. Throughout the year, night or day, Lions throughout Arizona volunteer their time, vehicles and gas money to transport human eyes from Sun City to Tucson. To date, over one hundred eyes have been transported by 53 Lions. This essential service for vision research has been absolutely significant to our mission.

The impact of these volunteers extends far beyond the miles they clock on their odometers; with each drop-off, we gain a much better understanding of the diseases and come to care much closer to better treatments and cures. Lion Dave Roberts is looking for at least 15 Lions from the Tucson area to help during the summer when many of the Arizona Lions have left. If you want to part of the Eyeball Express, please contact Dave Roberts at 1-800-677-3302.

Wanda Payne’s Gift to Sight

Tend, loving wife, dance partner—just some of the words which remind friends and family of Wanda. But Wanda has another legacy, one which has touched friends and stragglers alike in the Southwest. Her gifts to the Lions Eye Clinic and ophthalmic research.

Wanda was especially proud of her philanthropy. “She always felt that the Ophthalmology Department did a great work,” said cherry Martin, Wanda’s former caretaker and close friend. “She came from a working class family and wanted her life savings to support research.”

This working class background informed Wanda’s generosity. Growing up, she learned how to be hard-working, practical and scientific. Wanda was very specific about her wish. She wanted that the University of Arizona would have an endowed fund in support of ophthalmology research. She wanted to be acknowledged on the wall of recognition. She wanted information about the levels of giving and how to be listed.

Let Us Hear From You…

We would like to know about you’re thinking! Please look over this form to see if any of these topics interest you. If your concern or question is not addressed here, let us know to us at the bottom of this form or write to us at info@eyes.arizona.edu.

Issues of Interest

☐ Please consider featuring the following topics in a future newsletter:

☐ Please send me a brochure explaining Age-Related Macular Degeneration.

☐ Please send me a brochure explaining Glaucoma.

Issues of Support

☐ I would like more information about planning a gift through a charitable gift annuity, a charitable trust, or through your estate or bequest.

☐ I understand a gift of appreciated stocks would allow forgiveness of capital gain and a charitable deduction.

☐ Please list me/us to know how to be listed.

Issues of Contact

☐ The following family/friends have an interest in your work.

☐ Please send them your newsletter.

☐ I/we prefer that you do not solicit contributions from me/us by mail.

☐ Please remove me/us from your mailing list.

The Eyeball Express

An Eye to the future…